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A real "vanity" perfin  
**COMPEX** perfin is illegal  
—and has never seen actual postal use

By Floyd A. Walker

*In* 1966, COMPEX, the Combined Philatelic Exhibition of Chicagoland, issued what they called the *First U.S. Philatelic Exhibition Perfin* on September 9 as part of the COMPEX show at the La Salle Hotel.



The perfin was the word COMPEX spelled out in a straight line about 1-3/4 inches long. It far exceeded the allowable size for perfin on U.S. stamps both in terms of hole size and overall size.

The perfin is illustrated in the 1998 U.S. catalog but is not assigned a catalog number—and isn't considered a legitimate perfin.

As far as can be determined, the perfin was never used on mail sent through the post office.

Collectors could buy "first day" covers with the perfin cancelled at the COMPEX station that operated during the exhibition but those covers never moved through the postal service.

The perfin was used at least one other time—again on covers cancelled with the COMPEX show station cancel. Joe Coulbourne (#2574) has a COMPEX awards presentation and banquet menu distributed at the exhibition in 1968.

The present whereabouts of the perforator and its other possible uses have not been traced. Several attempts to contact members of Chicago area philatelic organizations have been unsuccessful.

It should be noted that the pattern appears to be one created from a canceling device. The design of the X in the pattern suggests that the perforator was not designed to perforate stamps.

If anyone has a copy of the perfin that has actually passed through the mail or can shed any light on the present location of the perforator, the editor would like that information.

This is #16 in the author's series on personal or vanity perfin on U.S. and foreign stamps.

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